

The Object of Your Mission Resource Management Planning

Among the many contributions that the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-06 made to the development and knowledge of American society was an inventory of the natural resources of the region it traversed. The nature of the forests, wetlands, and streams in the area determined the location and habits, as well as the very survival, of the Expedition members. Fort Clatsop National Memorial, a small historic site at the western end of the Expedition's journey, is charged with protecting a variety of diverse natural resources that are a component of the historical and cultural values associated with Lewis and Clark's expedition almost 200 years ago.

The recently-completed *General Management Plan* for Fort Clatsop identifies four alternatives that address visitor use and preservation of the environment in which the Fort Clatsop "chapter" of the Lewis and Clark story is presented to the public. In the preferred alternative, the first major action proposes to complete the trail corridor between Fort Clatsop and the Pacific Ocean, the

final segment of the 3700-mile-long Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Coupled to it is the need to provide protection of the scenic and natural resources which frame the park setting and trail corridor to the north, west and southwest of the existing park boundary.

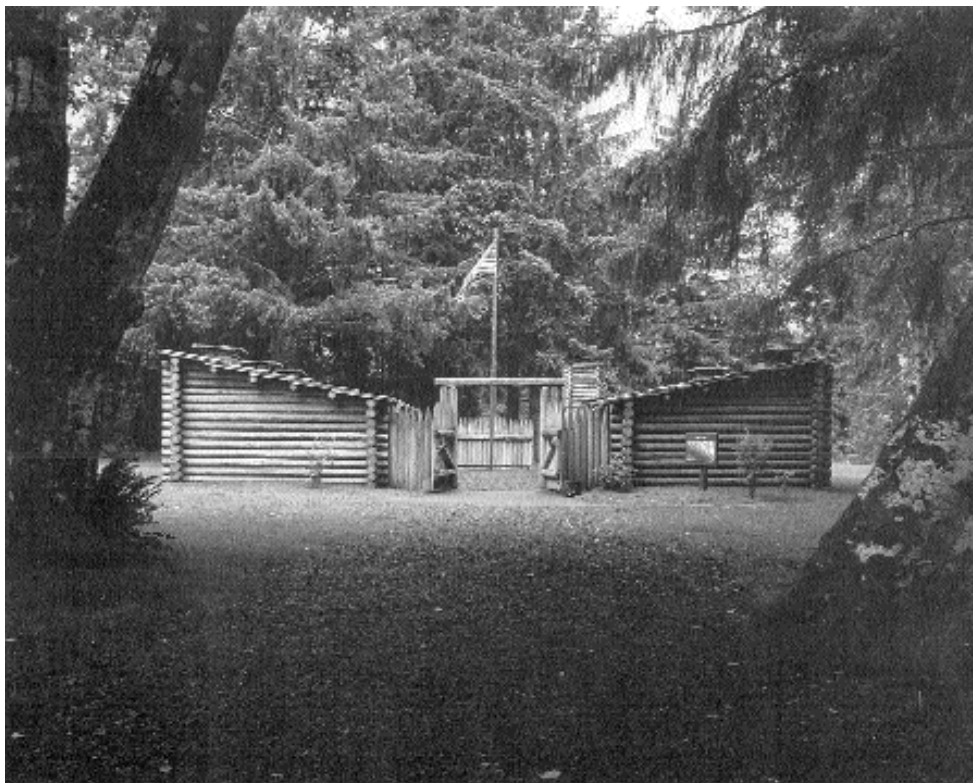
Of the principle objectives most vital to the implementation of the new *General Management Plan*, none is more important than to adequately protect and interpret the forested setting and forest ecology surrounding the core Fort area and through which the Trail will pass.

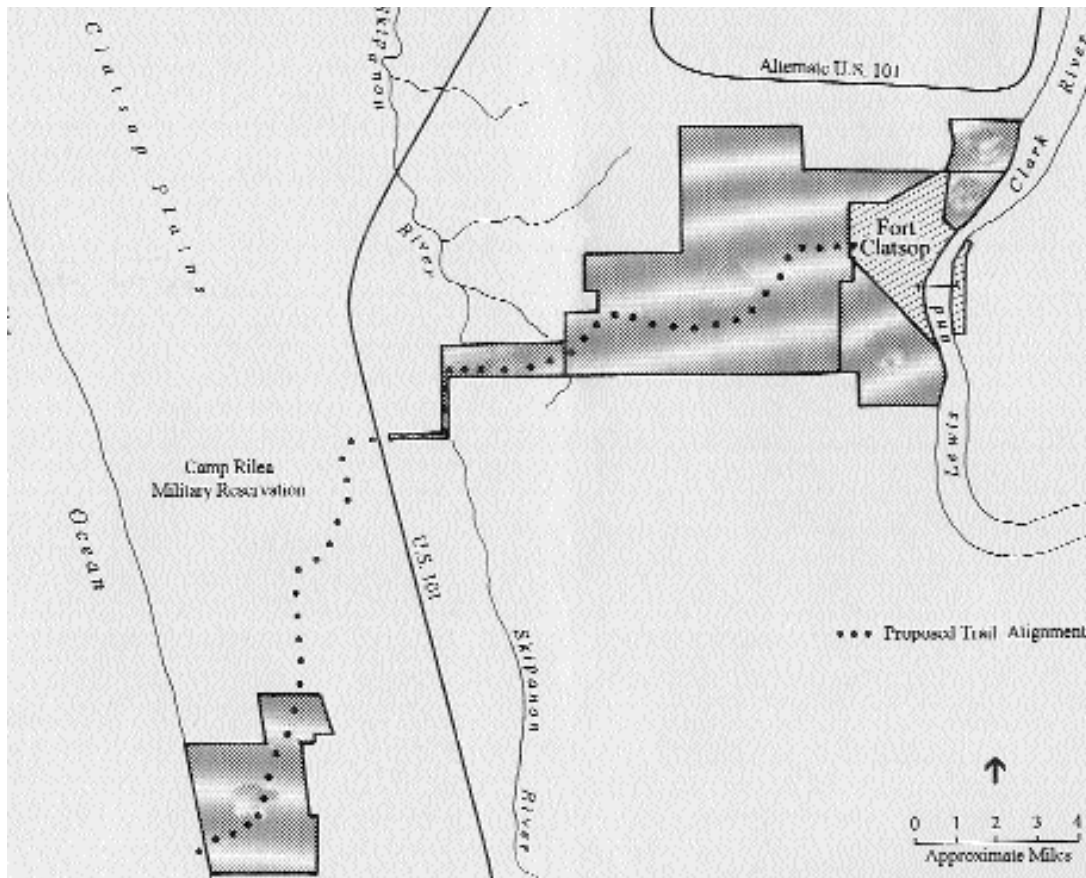
Today, the Corps of Discovery led by Lewis and Clark would be astounded to find a national memorial in their honor and the National Park Service preserving the vestiges of the natural splendor they saw in abundance nearly 200 years ago. For me, Thomas Jefferson's instructions to Meriwether Lewis (June 20, 1803 letter) was the beginning of the legacy we seek to perpetuate today and into the future:

You will ... endeavor to make yourself acquainted with names of the nations and their numbers; their language, traditions, arts and customs.... [An]other object worthy of notice will be the soil, the face of the country, it's growth and vegetable productions; the animals of the country....

The spruce-hemlock-cedar forests and sedge-cattail tidal wetlands around Fort Clatsop strongly influenced and directed the activities and experience of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. As a consequence, these natural components of the environment are managed as a historic as well as a natural resource. For example, the entire park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the tidal mudflats and forests that Lewis and Clark experienced. These natural resources are managed to recreate, as much as possible, this historic environment. A few noticeable changes are evident in

Fort Clatsop.
Courtesy Research
Library Fort Clatsop
National Memorial,
Astoria, Oregon.
NPS photo by
William S. Keller.





Site Map of Fort Clatsop.

certain intensively-used areas due to visitor safety as well as the degree of impact and alteration that occurred throughout the region before the park was established. In the non-visitor use areas, however, the management objective is a natural, healthy, and dynamic wetland and coastal forest environment similar to what Lewis and Clark may have experienced. Meeting these natural resource challenges has not been easy and has required an aggressive outreach and partnership program.

Tackling people's perception of the resources of Fort Clatsop has also been a challenge. Long identified as strictly a "historic area," this perception has often obscured the needs for natural resource management within the park.

Many entries in the Expedition's journals provide detailed inventory data of the flora and fauna from a period before European influence. A professional inventory program in 1992 has resulted in some interesting and unexpected resource finds.

It is difficult to assess species dependence, for example, on Fort Clatsop wetlands when no quantitative baseline research has been conducted. In addition, Geographic Information System (GIS) capability can now provide the analytic and graphic power to manage viewshed protection and archeological assessments during the development of a trail, re-forestation strategies, wetland restoration, and other resource manage-

ment projects.

However, it has only been in the last decade that the need for this type of research in historic sites has even been recognized.

How did planning enhance these management strategies? In one way, it highlighted the complex interface between natural and cultural resources. Most importantly, it strengthened the role of the park within the region and within the context of regional issues. We know that park boundaries do not necessarily protect all of the values that relate to park purposes and visitor experiences; Park Service activities may also affect activities on adjacent lands. Issues

relating to the adequacy of the current park boundary are long-standing and documented in the historic and administrative record.

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